



Regional Service Council Minutes

Region # 16

Meeting Date: June 29, 2006
Meeting Location: Haub Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana

Council Members Present: Regional Manager Virginia Combs
Larry Marchino
Susan Blackburn
Steve Cunningham
David Straw
Lark Buckman
Julie Weeks
Judge Brett Niemeier
Juanita Working
Judge Timothy Crowley
Judith Harper
Jara Dillingham (with Villages)

Council Members Absent: Chris Hoehn
Judge David Kelly

Others In Attendance: Dr. John Ireland (with Ireland & Luzio)
Michael Singleton (with Ireland & Luzio)
Celia Leaird (Department of Child Services)
Mike Jones
Cynthia Smith (Youth Service Bureau)

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Called to Order at: Approximately 5:05 p.m. (6:05 p.m. Indianapolis time) by Regional Manager Virginia Combs.

1. Mrs. Combs asked everyone to introduce themselves. The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes of the April 27th meeting had been mailed to all Council members prior to the meeting. On a motion by Steve Cunningham, seconded by Juanita Working, minutes of the April 27, 2006 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Mrs. Combs updated the group concerning staffing in Region 16. Nine new members are in extensive training and will be placed in Vanderburgh County after their graduation. Two counties, Gibson and Warrick, are sharing one

Family Case Manager each with Vanderburgh County for the summer until the additional Vanderburgh County staff graduates from training.

3. Gini Combs distributed Community Partners handouts to Council members. After September 1st the Department of Child Services will not be able to open voluntary service cases. It is felt that service cases have detracted from DCS legislated responsibilities. This new program will provide services to help prevent families from becoming involved in the DCS system. A family can have previous involvement with DCS; but if there is a current Informal Adjustment, wardship or open investigation, they cannot be involved with this program.

Gini then introduced Celia Leaird from the Department of Child Services in Indianapolis. Celia has been very involved in the development of this program and went into more detail about the program. There will be a statewide effort to target families who need services the most to prevent their coming into the system. Each region will have an agency administering the program with as few parameters as possible to allow for flexibility.

Other cities that have implemented a similar program have seen a lower number of substantiated referrals. Parents have given very positive feedback concerning their involvement. The biggest referral source next to DCS seems to be health clinics. Home visitors will help the family determine up to three strength-based goals to work toward. Data will be collected to determine whether families have a substantiated abuse or neglect in a 12-month time period after the family gets involved in the program. The average length of time that a family is engaged will be about four months. Some families will probably come back into the program when they have a crisis after their first program involvement.

Celia stated that we want every agency to be able to be a referral source. Gini mentioned that Mike Singleton, Dr. John Ireland and she have been doing presentations in each county in Region 16 to numerous groups including Wraparound teams, Child Protection Teams, and to school principals and teachers in pre-school meetings. Region 16 will be implementing the program starting July 1st.

Ninety percent of the service workers will be Ireland Home Based staff. Celia said that there might be subcontracts with other agencies. Ireland Home Based Services will bill for actual cost and be paid by the State at this time. Medicaid can be billed for these services. There will be oversight possibly by the Regional Service Councils on the quality, the needs and the outcomes of the program. Ireland will give monthly reports about their program activities.

Judge Brett Niemeier stated that Juvenile Court has 400 families that have a delinquent who are not receiving any services. Celia responded that if there are already adjudicated delinquents in the family, then that family cannot be referred to this program.

Gini asked council members to email her with any questions for Celia, and she will get the answers and share with all members.

4. Gini stated that she is developing a Region 16 Community Forum to share information about Child Abuse and Neglect, and to introduce the new Community Partners program. She has asked Dr. Roberta Hibbard, a well-known pediatric medical expert to be the key speaker. Dr. Hibbard was here ten to fifteen years ago and was very well received. Gini is in the process of finding a suitable location for the Forum which will take place in August. Volunteers from this group are needed for this project. Gini asked members to call or email her about any ideas they have for Dr. Hibbard to speak about.

5. Miscellaneous

Mrs. Combs distributed handouts concerning new legislation that will be effective July 1st to keep everyone posted on legislation that impacts the Department of Child Services. Please email her with any questions that you might have about it.

Judge Brett Niemeier informed us that there is a new definition of wardship which will now allow giving authority to the Department of Child Services to make all decisions. Actually Judges would have to reserve their right to make those decisions. Otherwise, the DCS will make decisions. He isn't sure what individual judges will decide to do.

Judge Timothy Crowley stated that there is new legislation that says children have to stay in school until they are 18 years old. Increased truancy in the future is likely.

Next Meeting Date, Location and Time: August 31, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. at Haub Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana. Mrs. Combs noted that we will review budgets with the county directors at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at: Approximately 7:05 p.m. (8:05 p.m. Indianapolis time) upon a motion by Juanita Working, and seconded by Judge Brett Niemeier.